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ABSTRACT

The aim of this locally-funded cooperative enterprise of the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and the College of Education (COE) of the University of New Mexico is to improve the training of secondary and middle school teachers and to improve the secondary English curriculum. Student teachers are selected competitively for the program, which includes one semester of courses on human development, teaching methods, and curriculum construction, followed by a semester of full-time student teaching for which participants receive a $350 stipend. The student teachers and cooperating teachers work in teams of five or six in special facilities that can accommodate up to 80 students. Along with university personnel, they also participate in interpersonal training sessions. The revised curriculum developed during the first 2 years of the program will be implemented this year and then revised again if necessary. APSCOE funding is accomplished by an agreement between APS and COE whereby expected teacher vacancies in the target schools are left unfilled and the money saved is allocated to APSCOE purposes. The personnel gap is filled by the full-time student teachers. (RT)

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THE APSCOE PROJECT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

An Experimental Teacher Training Program to Improve Curriculum and Instruction in Secondary School English and in Middle Schools

Submitted for Consideration by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in Competition for the Distinguished Achievement Awards of 1970

The College of Education
of the University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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I. SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM

The APSCOE Project in Secondary Education will shortly begin its third year of efforts to improve the training of junior and senior high school English teachers, and its first year of an experiment in the training of teachers for middle schools. Both the APSCOE Project in Secondary English and the APSCOE Middle School Project are locally funded, cooperative enterprises of the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and the College of Education (COE) of the University of New Mexico. Their central mission is to improve teacher training by involving outstanding trainees as deeply and realistically as possible in curriculum construction and in the study and use of effective instructional strategies. Both phases of the APSCOE Project also encompass the retraining of the eighteen cooperating teachers working in the project, and continuous research on teacher, trainee, and pupil learning that may be attributable to project activities and experiences.

In traditional teacher training programs, students often complete as many as six or more prescribed courses taught on the university campus before they go out to encounter, as student teachers, the realities of school and classroom. In APSCOE, the competitively selected "Honors Internes" enter the program after only two courses in the foundations of education. At this point they begin a semester's program of studies which includes a seven-credit "block" which concentrates upon human growth and development, methods of teaching, and curriculum construction. Early in this preparatory semester, the internes are assigned to grade-level teams consisting of three or four internes and two cooperating teachers. The teams then work together in planning the following semester's instruction. In that semester, the internes undertake <u>full-time</u> student teaching, for which they are given fifteen hours of credit instead of the customary six that may be earned in the usual part-time student teaching arrangement. They also receive

$350 as a student teaching scholarship. The grade-level teams handle two regular classes per period instead of one in special facilities that can accommodate up to 70 or 80 pupils. These large double classrooms are equipped with accordian dividers which permit the pupils to be sorted in varying numbers into at least two groups. Given the number of team members, and depending upon the availability of other teaching spaces in the target schools, the teacher:pupil ratios can range from 1:70 to 1:1.

By June of 1970, the APSCOE Project will have completed the training of 79 interns and will be deeply involved in the training of 39 more. It will have made significant changes in the attitudes and behaviors of 12 cooperating teachers (a fact borne out, at statistical levels of significance, by the various tests that have been administered as part of the project's research efforts), and it will have begun the retraining of six more.

II. EXPLANATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM

In its system of totally local funding, in its special arrangements for intensely practical teacher training, and in its emphasis upon the construction and testing of new curricula, the APSCOE Project is certainly unusual, and perhaps unique. The core, or central fact, of the APSCOE Project is an agreement between the APS and the COE whereby expected teacher vacancies in the target schools are left unfilled, and the money that would have been needed to fill those vacancies is allocated to APSCOE purposes. In the first year of the APSCOE Project in Secondary English, the rate for each of the six expected English vacancies in the target junior and senior high schools (one per grade level) was pegged at the then beginning APS salary of $5,400, yielding an APSCOE budget of $32,400. In the second year, the rate was raised to $7,000, a figure more closely approximating the average APS salary, thus providing $42,000 in APSCOE funding. In the coming third year, the figure is expected to advance to $8,000 (still less than the actual APS average salary), so that the nine positions -- three in the target middle school, and three each in the target junior and senior high schools -- will provide an APSCOE budget of $72,000. To understand how this arrangement works, one needs to know that the classes that would have been taught by teachers appointed for the purpose are taught by the APSCOE teams who teach two classes per period instead of one. And it should be remembered that the monies allocated to the APSCOE Project are monies that the APS would have had to expend anyway in filling the teaching vacancies in the three schools. It is also important to any discussion of APSCOE funding to realize the contribution of the University of New Mexico, mainly through allocating the time of staff members to the project.

Both APSCOE areas also have a major curricular mission. The APSCOE Project in Secondary English continues to develop and refine a thoroughly revised and

articulated curriculum in English for grades seven through twelve, based primarily upon modern linguistic and pedagogical concepts derived from research, and continues its work in producing detailed analyses of the tasks and subtasks involved in twelve areas of English skills learning according to grade level. The APSCOE Middle School Project is concerned with developing an articulated curriculum specifically designed for schools encompassing grades six, seven, and eight, with particular attention being given to the cross fields/unified studies approach based largely upon language arts and the social studies. The curriculum for grades seven through twelve in Secondary English is presently undergoing its first complete revision. The first semester's curricular efforts from APSCOE I were revised and modified last spring during the training semester by APSCOE III, which is presently using and testing its revised version in the classroom. APSCOE IV, now in its training semester, is revising, modifying, and adding to the curricular efforts of APSCOE II. Thereby each curricular effort is revised and then tested in actual classroom practice. Beginning this spring with APSCOE V, the curriculum will undergo still another revision and refinement. In addition to the continuing refinement of curricula, the APSCOE project began production of detailed task analyses of English skills which is also added to and revised by each subsequent group. This identification of the specific tasks that make up the general skills, such as listening, is based upon grade level.

It needs to be clearly understood that each group does not work on curricular revision in isolation. APSCOE II's plans were not conceived without regard for APSCOE I's. Planning is done by groups consisting of in-practice internes, in-training internes, cooperating teachers, and university personnel. Nor is planning done in grade level isolation. This is especially evident in the task analysis groups, which deliberately include representatives from various grade levels. In general, curricular planning and revision reflects cooperative efforts from all

concerned. Indicative of curricular efforts and presently being used as the basis for additional work are seventeen detailed "log" books. Each book includes general unit plans, daily plans, daily reactions to plans, and incidental material and comments. Six (or more) of these "log" books, which comprise the substance of the curriculum, are presently being compiled by APSCOE III. The new APSCOE middle school plans to follow a similar curricular approach.

The content of the curriculum reflects today's increased need for meaningfulness or relevancy. Such units as "The Apathetic Individual," "The Rebel in Society," and "Tolerating Ambiguity" indicate the social underpinning of this English curriculum. The ninth grade makes direct use of the culture of the Southwest as a unifying theme. Other units reflect a similar kind of "sociological English." The linguistic notion of language in society pervades the curriculum at all grade levels.

Closely related to the success of the curriculum development was the initial training of both the cooperating teachers and internes. The teachers and the trainees were enrolled together in courses preliminary to the beginning of the operational phase of the project, thereby sharing in the bases of modern linguistic and pedagogical concepts.

A special APSCOE office with a full time secretary serves as a central headquarters for all APSCOE activities and serves also as a book and equipment depository for the target high school. The junior high school also has a central "office" but without secretarial help. Both offices include a library of professional books and materials which serve as references and source materials for planning and task analyses. The main office library contains many current academic items, including books on linguistics, literary criticism, rhetoric, composition, and curriculum. All book and equipment orders are handled through the main APSCOE office. The space for the offices as well as special double classroom buildings was provided at the high school in the form of special modular buildings. Remodeling of regular

classrooms at the junior high school into double rooms was also included in APS support of the project.

In the operational phase, trainees and cooperating teachers work together in teams at each grade level, handling one double class four times a day. Internes are left with one period for planning as well as time for team meetings with both of the cooperating teachers daily. Each team, composed of the two cooperating teachers and a minimum of three internes, is free to divide the pupils according to needs and instructional purposes. Teacher:pupil ratios are available from 1:1 up to 1:70. Team teaching in all its phases is readily available. In essence internes and cooperating teachers are responsible for teaching twelve English classes in each of four periods a day or 48 English classes in all. Using a standard teacher:pupil ratio of 1:30, this further means that project teachers and internes handle the English instruction of 1,440 secondary school students in the two schools during the year. An important note about the pupils is that they come from the "average" track. Neither the training nor the curriculum is aimed at either extreme, assuring a greater usefulness and applicability.

New in this second year of operation is the addition of interpersonal training, whereby internes in-practice, internes in-training, cooperating teachers, and university personnel can participate under the direction of clinical psychologists. Sometimes called "sensitivity training" but not identical to it, these interpersonal behavior sessions are intended to facilitate the interpersonal relations necessary for successful team accomplishments. This training is expected to benefit not only team activity but later departmental membership.

Among the personnel involved is the Field Supervisor of the project, who provides constant liaison between the APS administration and APSCOE. This position is held by the assistant principal at the target high school (who is a former English teacher in the system) and provides the project with considerable direction

and efficiency within the administrative framework. The Director of the project from the University of New Mexico provides the major impetus for the success of the program and is also the major professor of instruction for internes and cooperating teachers. A second professor was released part time to direct the research for the project.

APSCOE monies have bought a good deal with the relatively modest amounts expended. Beyond the work that APSCOE funds have accomplished and continue to accomplish in training new teachers, retraining employed ones, developing a new and modern articulated curriculum in secondary English, and writing major analyses of the tasks and subtasks of English skills learning, the monies have been allocated in ways which represent an even more direct return to the sponsoring organization. As of Oct. 27, 1969, APSCOE has purchased $11,047 in instructional support materials. Most of these materials consist of books, recordings, and tapes which remain a part of the permanent instructional resources of the two schools. The twelve cooperating teachers by next June will have received $19,200 in extra compensation for their supervisory services. During the first year, they were given $600 each for their work as grade level team leaders. This amount was increased to $1,000 for the current year. The major point is that a little over $19,000 has gone back into teacher pay, which is, of course, the basic source of funding. This extra function of regular teachers may provide a departure point for staff differentiation within the APS system. By the end of this second year, 79 outstanding candidates will have been trained for positions in secondary school English. Each of these internes receives a scholarship of $350 for his service as a student teacher. The fact that APSCOE student teachers are "paid" does make a difference in the attitudes with which they approach this most crucial phase in their training. This scholarship or stipend permits many internes to give up distracting outside employment, which typically yields little more than dimes and

quarters, anyway. For the married women, the scholarship has provided a baby-sitting fund which has freed them from home obligations at odd times for team meetings where the planning of units and lessons is the major order of business. At the end of this second year of the APSCOE operation, $27,650 will have been expended for interne scholarships. The remaining monies have been used for sound and duplicating equipment, and for secretarial, recording, research, and consultative services.

The fact that APSCOE is doing a great many kinds of things with its money says nothing, of course, about the quality of what it is doing. One can get all kinds of positive, but highly subjective, opinions from APSCOE participants about what is being done. Much of the objective evidence, however, from the first year of operation is only now being analyzed by computer and researcher. Some objective data have already hinted at very interesting findings. One pre- and post- test of cooperating teachers seems to show a remarkable change in their attitudes and approaches to teacher-learner "situations." On the other hand, a "Feelings about English" test given to APSCOE pupils has yielded almost no statistically significant results, except for the hint that students' "liking of English" may increase by a pattern of succeeding grade levels. It may not; it cannot be concluded from the preliminary data. In any event, the project is too much "in transit" for judgments of quality to be made, except on a subjective basis. Specific objective research activity is, of course, a part of the project and will become a part of the final analysis, as will the subjective reaction papers from the trainees.

In summary the APSCOE Project in Secondary English (as will the APSCOE Middle School Project) has four basic elements: (1) special pre-service training of outstanding candidates for careers in English teaching; (2) in-service training of the cooperating teachers who serve as leaders of grade level teams of internes; (3) planning of an articulated curriculum with particular attention to the

instructional implications of recent scholarly research; and (4) experimental use of methodologies which research in both general learning theory and language learning theory shows to be potentially more effective than those employed in the past, with special emphasis upon inductive approaches to teaching and learning.

The major contribution of the project is, of course, improvement of teacher training. Student teachers receive preliminary training in the context of the actual teaching situation and they also participate in student teaching on a more realistic full-time basis. They also participate directly in writing and testing meaningful curricula and in analyzing and articulating the specific objectives of skills learning. They operate within teams and they receive payment for their efforts. In general the training is realistic in setting, realistic in operation, and is not begrudging in demands for all concerned.